

HORSESHOE RANGER STATION
15 Miles South of Parshall
Grand County
Colorado

HABS No. CO-62

HABS
COLO,
25-PARS.V,

1-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
HORSESHOE RANGER STATION

HABS No. CO-62

Location: About 15 miles south of Parshall,
Colorado on Grand County Road 3.
UTM Coordinates: 13.405601E/44.17778N
7.5 Minute USGS Quad: Sylvan Reservoir, 1979

Present Owner: United States Department of the
Interior, Bureau of Land Management,
Craig District, Kremmling Resource
Area Office, P.O. Box 68, Kremmling,
Colorado 80459

Present Occupant: Abandoned

Significance: The Horseshoe Ranger Station is
significant on a local, and possibly
state level, because it was one of
the first ranger stations built and
used on the Arapaho National Forest.
The site, dating from about 1909,
represents a classic ranger station
and is one of the last such stations
in Colorado. However, it is not the
only forest guard station eligible
for the National Register of
Historic Places. The Hog Park Ranger
Station, located on the Routt
National Forest, is listed in the
National Register and also
represents an early Forest Service
station.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: Considering a lack of records, it appears that the smaller building was the original guard station and was erected about 1909. The larger building, which is much newer, was probably built in the mid-1930s, perhaps a Civilian Conservation Corps project.
2. Architect: These building followed standard U. S. Forest Service plans for guard stations.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners: U.S Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management.

1906-40 acre parcel (T.1.S, R.78W, S. 34, SESW 1/4)
withdrawn under Public Land Order as administrative site.

1983-Withdrawn as administrative site by Public Land Order
Number 6420, July 21, 1983.

4. Builders and Suppliers: Unknown
5. Original Plans and Construction: No known original plans are available. No exact construction dates are available.
6. Alterations and Additions: Building A represents the first guard station, built around 1906. It was modified at a later date when a concrete foundation was poured under the log building. Building B represents a larger residence, built in the mid-1920s, and consisting of several rooms. This building, while well-maintained, was not substantially modified since its construction.

B. Historical Context:

The Horseshoe Ranger Station represents the creation of our national forests. Arapaho Timber Reserve, as it was originally called grew to its present size through a series of boundary adjustments over the years. The reserve became a national forest in 1908. As timber reserves/national forest were created, rangers were assigned to patrol the land. Their jobs included controlling unregulated logging, enforcing grazing regulations, watching for forest fires, and in general preventing settlement from encroaching on the forest.

To say the least, a ranger's job was dangerous. The grazing issue alone caused many a ranger to literally face death in the form of a gun-toting cowboy. To provide shelter for its rangers, the Forest Service built guard stations to house employees. A ranger was assigned to each guard station year around and from here he patrolled the forest. The stations usually were two room log cabins, with an outhouse and a well for water. Each station also had a corral because horses were the ranger's only transportation.

Since a ranger was "stationed" for a long period of time, the guard station became his home. This was a common phenomena throughout the western United States well into the 1950s.

The U.S. Forest Service was created in 1906 when the various timber reserves were removed from Department of the Interior administration and transferred to the Department of Agriculture. The first timber reserves were created in 1890 (Shoshone in Wyoming) and 1891 (White River in Colorado) when they were administratively withdrawn from entry. The purpose of the reserves was to protect timber and watershed from uncontrolled development. The Department of the Interior administered these lands and began issuing permits for use by ranchers and lumbermen. In 1906 Gifford Pinchot convinced President Theodore Roosevelt to create a Forest Service, and manage the reserves as national forests. It was at this time that many of the national forests in the west were created by Teddy Roosevelt.

In 1906, for example, the Arapaho Timber Reserve was formed to protect the watershed in Middle Park, Colorado. The first rangers hired to enforce the new rules regarding tree cutting and grazing were assigned to ranger stations. The Horseshoe Ranger Station was probably the first place site built on the Arapaho. It represents the newly created Forest Service's commitment to land management. Ironically, the site upon which the station sits was withdrawn from the public domain, (under the Department of the Interior), by the new Forest Service only after a prolonged political battle between the Departments of Interior and Agriculture over who would manage the national forests. The creation of the national forests to a large extent closed the "frontier" by limiting uncontrolled homesteading, mining and timbering.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Horseshoe Ranger Station is a typical standard Forest Service design series of log structures. They are vernacular in style. However, since they are similar to many log structures found in the National Parks and National Forests they could also be considered "rustic" in style.

2. Condition of the Fabric: The exterior condition of the structures is sound. They were well-maintained into the 1980s. However, since abandonment, there has been vandalism to the large building, mostly by hunters, and interior damage has occurred. The exterior remains in good condition, although the roof is being damaged due to neglect.

It should be noted that the original "ranger station" Building A) has been removed and is now located in Hot Sulphur Springs, Colorado.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Building A is rectangular log structure that measures 30 feet by 13 feet. It is concrete chinked and the logs have been painted a dark brown. Building B is a square log structure. The building measures 32 feet by 33 feet. Building B is also concrete chinked and the logs are painted dark brown.
2. Foundation: The foundation for Building A is poured solid concrete slab, while the foundation for Building B is poured concrete foundation upon which the building sits.
3. Wall construction: Log, both buildings. Average log size is 8 to 12 inches. Concrete chinking for both buildings.
4. Structural Systems: Interlocking logs, with dovetail cuts; both buildings.
5. Porches: One bay entrance porch on both buildings. Building A porch on north elevation. Building B porch measuring 10 feet by 16 feet on east elevation.
6. Chimneys: The buildings have one native rock chimney each.
7. Openings: Building A has four wooden double hung frame windows with four over four lights. There is one wooden (front) door with a two light opening. Building B has nine wooden double hung frame windows, with two over two lights. There are two wooden doors, the front and the side; each have one light.
8. Roof: Building A has a simple wooden shingle gable roof. Building B has an equally simple wooden shingle gable roof.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Building A. This building is a rectangular plan with two rooms divided by a partition in the center of the building.
- b. Building B. This building is a square plan with rooms divided by partitions.

2. Stairways: None.

3. Flooring: In both buildings the floors are tongue and groove pine planks.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: In both buildings the interior walls are lath and plaster. The ceilings are knotty pine tongue and groove planking.

5. Decorative Features: There are no decorative features in either building. Both structures were building for function only.

6. Lighting fixtures: There are overhead lights that are either bare bulbs or are cheap kitchen fixtures.

7. Heating: There are fireplaces in both structures. In Building B there is a kitchen and a wood stove pipe indicates that a wood stove provided heat.

The interior of the buildings were removed except for the plaster walls and the wooden ceilings. No interior photographs were taken because no features remained.

D. Site:

1. General Setting: The Horseshoe Ranger Station is located on a large pasture (40 acres) next to low lying hills and is directly adjacent to the Arapaho National Forest. The overall site is flat, and is covered in native buffalo grasses. West of the buildings, the vegetation is spruce, pine, and aspen trees. The vegetation around Building A is particularly heavy. The rear of the building was so overgrown by large bushes and trees that photography of the rear of the structure was impossible.

2. Outbuildings: There is a large pole fence corral directly in front of Building B. There are the remains of an outhouse behind Building A. There is a woodshed just east of Building A.

3. Landscaping: There is a gravel road that leads from the county road into a parking area, also gravel, between Building A and Building B. There is no formal landscaping at this complex.

Prepared by:
Frederic J. Athearn, Historian
Bureau of Land Management
Project Supervisor
August, 1982

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Primary and unpublished sources:

U.S. Forest Service. "History of the Routt Forest".
(Steamboat Springs, Colorado: U.S. Forest Service, 1972).
Unpublished Manuscript.

B. Secondary and published sources:

Athearn, Frederic J. An Isolated Empire: A History of Northwestern Colorado. Denver, Colorado: Bureau of Land Management, 1982. Third Edition.

Black, Robert C. Island in the Rockies.
Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Press, 1969.

McCarthy, G. Michael. Hour of Trial: The Conservation Movement in Colorado and the West, 1891-1907. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977.

Pearce, Sarah J. A Guide to Colorado Architecture. Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 1983.

Shoemaker, Len. "National Forests." Colorado Magazine. XX, Number 5, 1944. pp.182-184.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was sponsored by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado State Office, Lakewood, Colorado. This site was recorded under the direction of Dr. Frederic J. Athearn, Bureau of Land Management. The measured drawings and photographs were made in August, 1982. The measured drawings were prepared by Leigh A. Wellborn, Architect, Bureau of Land Management (retired). The archival photographs were taken by Frederic J. Athearn, Bureau of Land Management. The historical narrative was prepared by Frederic J. Athearn, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado State Office, Lakewood, Colorado.